

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5315

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 07402

JAKARTA ALSO FOR HOLBROOKE

PASS ICA

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, EGEN, SHUM, OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER R.), RP

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IT IS OUR PRELIMINARY VIEW THAT VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT HAD POSITIVE IMPACT ON US-RP RELATIONSHIP. GREATEST IMPACT WAS PSYCHOLOGICAL: TENSIONS AND IRRITATIONS OF THE RECENT PAST HAVE BEEN EASED, BASIC STRUCTURE OF STRONG BILATERAL TIES WAS REVALIDATED, AND PHIL PUBLIC WAS REMINDED IN DRAMATIC MANNER OF HISTORIC AND EXCEPTIONAL TIES BETWEEN US AND PHILIPPINES.

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- THE JOINT STATEMENT ON MILITARY BASES IS OF VALUE TO BOTH COUNTRIES. AS ANTICIPATED, THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO MOVEMENT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. ON HUMAN RIGHTS, MARCOS WAS GIVEN PRIVATE INSIGHT INTO STRENGTH OF US FEELINGS AND CONCERNS. ONLY FUTURE WILL SHOW EXTENT TO WHICH HIS ACTIONS ARE AFFECTED BUT THERE ARE NO SIGNS YET THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECT OF VISIT OFFENDED MARCOS

OR OTHER GOP LEADERS.

- AS FOR MARCOS INTERNAL POSITION, IT HAS PROBABLY BEEN STRENGTHENED BY VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VICE PRESIDENT ARRIVED IN MANILA AT A TIME OF UNUSUAL TENSION IN US-RP RELATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN IN EVIDENCE SINCE THE FIRST OF THE YEAR AND WHICH PEAKED IN THE PERIOD OF RECENT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THIS TENSION DERIVED LARGELY FROM US ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES INCLUDING THE VISIT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN IN EARLY JANUARY, AND THE RELEASE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS IN LATE JANUARY. OUR FOCUS ON THE AQUINO CASE WAS A MATTER OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO MARCOS WHO REACTED WITH GREAT SENSITIVITY TO THESE AMERICAN INITIATIVES. AS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN MANILA BEGAN TO GO BADLY FOR MARCOS, HE COMPULSIVELY STRUCK OUT AT THE US, PROBABLY BLAMING THE AMERICANS IN HIS HEART FOR HAVING INDUCED THE ELECTIONS AND THE AQUINO CANDIDACY. IN THIS EMOTIONAL CONTEXT MARCOS' ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS MAY EVEN HAVE RAISED DOUBTS ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF US-RP RELATIONS.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE IMPACT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN POSITIVE, SERVING TO REVALIDATE--PARTICULARLY IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL
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SENSE--THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE VISIT WAS THE FIRST BY A RANKING MEMBER OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, A GESTURE OF NO SMALL IMPORTANCE TO MARCOS AND THE PHILIPPINES. AND THE GOP'S RECEPTION OF THE VISITOR WAS HIGHLY CORDIAL. THE GOOD RAPPORT STRUCK BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCIPALS WAS A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN LENDING A POSITIVE CAST TO THE VISIT. IN SHORT, WE SENSE THAT THE VISIT HAS MITIGATED THE PREVAILING TENSION IN THE RELATIONSHIP. THE BILATERAL FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN REFURBISHED AND WE CAN PROCEED WITH SOME ADDED CONFIDENCE TO ADDRESS THE DIFFICULT SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES BETWEEN US.

4. THE PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ACHIEVEMENT WAS THE JOINT STATEMENT ON THE MILITARY BASES. WE HAVE GAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT AN EXPLICIT STATEMENT BY MARCOS THAT THE BASES ARE OF VALUE TO THE PHILIPPINES AS WELL AS TO THE US; EXPLICIT ASSURANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMAND AND CONTROL AND UNHAMPERED MILITARY OPERATIONS; A RECOGNITION OF THE 1991 TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT SUBJECT TO PERIODIC REASSESSMENTS. THE ATMOSPHERE IS GOOD AND THE WAY IS OPEN TO PROCEED WITH DETAILED DISCUSSIONS TO

DETERMINE HOW TO MANIFEST THESE AGREED PRINCIPLES. BUT
IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW QUICKLY AND COOPERATIVELY THE
GOP WILL MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION.

5. THE IMPACT OF THE TALKS ON BILATERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES
WAS MINIMAL: NEUTRAL AT THE LEAST, MILDLY POSITIVE AT
MOST. MARCOS TREATED THESE ISSUES RATHER PERFUNCTORILY
AND UNEMOTIONALLY AND DID NOT SEEK TO LINK THEM, AS
ADVERTISED TO THE MILITARY BASES. THERE WERE SOME
SMALL PLUSES--E.G., AGREEMENT TO SEND A US ENERGY TEAM
TO THE PHILIPPINES--BUT THE VARIOUS TRADE AND OTHER ISSUE

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REMAIN FOR RESOLUTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. ON THE MOST SENSITIVE FRONT OF ALL, HUMAN RIGHTS,
MARCOS WAS GIVEN--THROUGH A LONG AND ENTIRELY PRIVATE
SESSION WITH VICE PRESIDENT--INSIGHTS INTO THE
STRENGTH OF US FEELINGS AND CONCERNS. THROUGH HIS
PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH CHURCH AND OPPOSITION LEADERS,
AS WELL AS PARTS OF HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, THE VICE
PRESIDENT SINGALED TO THE PHILIPPINE PUBLIC THE

ADMINISTRATION'S INTEREST IN THIS AREA. MARCOS LISTENED, REBUTTED AND GAVE LITTLE OR NO GROUND--AND WE WILL KNOW ONLY FROM THE FUTURE TO WHAT EXTENT HIS ACTIONS ARE AFFECTED BY THE INSIGHTS HE WAS GIVEN. WE HAVE NO SECRET

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SIGNS YET THAT MARCOS OR OTHER GOP LEADERS WERE OFFENDED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS OF THE VISIT. THERE WAS QUITE LIMITED LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT' PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH RELIGIOUS FIGURES AND POLITICAL OPPOSITIONISTS. THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL COVERAGE OF MARCOS' DEFENSIVE ASSERTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS.

7. AS FOR MARCOS HIMSELF, HIS INTERNAL POSITION HAS PROBABLY BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE VISIT. THE CLOSE US-RP LINKS HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY RECONFIRMED, A DESIRABLE OUTCOME FOR THE MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS. MARCOS OBTAINED THE CLEAREST USG PUBLIC ASSERTION TO DATE ON PHILIPPINE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE BASES, ALSO OF VALUE TO HIM DOMESTICALLY. WHILE NO SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS WAS MADE ON TRADE ISSUES, THE HATFUL OF NEW ECONOMIC LOAN/GRANT AGREEMENTS (ALREADY PROGRAMMED) SIGNED DURING THE VISIT ARE EVIDENCE OF HIS CONTINUING ABILITY TO DRAW IN US DEVELOPMENTAL RESOURCES. WE DOUBT THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ELEMENTS OF THE VISIT PROBABLY HAD ANY APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON MARCOS' STANDING AT HOME. THERE MAY BE SOME FILIPINOS WHO GIVE GOOD MARKS TO THE PRESIDENT FOR THE HARD-LINE PUBLIC STANCE HE TOOK IN DEFENDING THE FLAG AND STANDING UP TO THE US. STULL

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